

REMARKS

A request for a two-month extension of time accompanies this Amendment.

No objection to the drawings having been made by the Examiner, the drawings are considered acceptable as filed.

Reconsideration of the rejection of the claims and allowance of the application as amended are requested.

Claims 1-5 (all claims pending) were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) and 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent 5,181,379 to Wakeman et al, U.S. Patent 5,558,922 to Gupta et al, and U.S. Patent 4,076,100 to Davis.

The Examiner's remarks and the references were thoroughly reviewed by the applicants and claim 1 was amended in deference to the Examiner's remarks to distinguish over the art of record. In particular, claim 1 was amended to remove an apparent uncertainty that the micro-cavities in the structural member were intended to extend through the entire thickness of the structural member. Clearly such was not the intention of the applicant as is clearly depicted in the drawings. The amendments to claim 1 find full support in the specification and claims as originally filed. Claim 5 was canceled. Claims 2-4 remain as originally presented as depending from claim 1. Applicant believes that claims 1-4 as presented herein are allowable over all art of record.

Consider now the teachings of the references.

Wakeman et al teach a gas turbine engine liner having a plurality of cooling holes defined through the thickness of the liner in order to inject coolant air from the cool side to the hot side of the liner. This reference is now avoided by the amendments to claim 1 presented herein wherein the depth of the micro-cavities is now defined as less than the thickness of the structural member.

Gupta et al teach a ceramic thermal barrier layer for an article subjected to a hostile thermal environment, such as a component of a gas turbine engine, the layer having on its outer surface a plurality of grooves selectively placed in order to promote resistance to spalling and stress relaxation of the barrier. Davis teaches an oil impervious acoustical board including a melamine board having a plurality of grooves on one side thereof and covered by an impervious thin film. These references are also avoided by the amendments to claim 1, wherein the size and depth of the micro-cavities is specified, and by the cancellation of claim 5 wherein a porous sintered coating was claimed.

In view of the foregoing, it is clear the applicant's invention is patentably distinct from that described collectively in the references cited by the Examiner. Claims 1-4 as presented herein being therefore directed to allowable subject matter and otherwise meeting all objections to allowance, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner reconsider the rejection of the claims and allow the application as amended.

Respectfully submitted,



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27 JAN 2003

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APPENDIX A
AMENDED CLAIMS
VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

1. (amended) A structural element for enclosing or supporting hot operating machinery, comprising:
 - (a) a structural member for enclosing or supporting a hot operating machinery; and
 - (b) means defining a plurality of micro-cavities of preselected width and of preselected depth less than the thickness of said structural member on the outer surface of said structural member for mitigating ignition of a flammable liquid that comes into contact with said structural member, said micro-cavities being about one millimeter in width [sized] to minimize seepage of the liquid into said micro-cavities because of the surface tension of the liquid.